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note to the author's method is contained in his own statement: "This method has been the formulation of a working hypothetical scheme to form a frame-work into which the facts are fitted, and the scheme is regarded as satisfactory only if the facts can thus be fitted so as to form a coherent whole, all parts of which are consistent with one another" (II. 586). A method such as this, while admirably suited to the conceptualizations applied in the domain of the exact sciences, breaks down completely when the task is that of disentangling an historical situation. Whenever thus applied, the method has invariably led to purely artificial and fantastic constructions, and must be designated as emphatically unhistorical. In this respect Dr. Rivers's theoretical position must be classed with that of Graebner, the leading representative of the so-called "historical" school in ethnology. Here, however, the analogy ends, for one finds in Dr. Rivers's work none of that mechanical handling of cultural data which is so characteristic of Graebner; instead, systematic and often brilliant use is made of psychological analysis and interpretation extended to all phases of culture. In this as well as in the thought-stirring character of Dr. Rivers's argument will lie the permanent value of his latest contribution to ethnology.

A. A. GOLDENWEISER.

*A History of Persia.* By Lieut.-Col. P. M. SYKES. In two volumes. (London: Macmillan and Company. 1915. Pp. xxvi, 544; xxii, 565. With maps and illustrations.)

COLONEL SYKES, whose earlier work on Persian subjects is well known and deservedly valued (his *Ten Thousand Miles in Persia* is one of the best books we have had in English for many years on the Middle East), has long designed and worked towards such a Persian history as he has now given us. His only serious rival, in his own language, Sir John Malcolm's *History of Persia from its most Early Period to the Present Time*, was published in 1815, and since that time much has been done. As Colonel Sykes reminds us, in the last century the cuneiform and other inscriptions, now solved, deciphered, and studied, have revealed a new side of historic truth; and hardly less valuable have been the excavations of ancient sites and monuments, apart from their written legacy to the world. "Susa has yielded up its secrets"—like Nineveh and many another. The remains of Old Persian palaces and tombs and altars and cities, the Behistun inscription, the cylinder of Cyrus, are things which alter our whole outlook upon Eastern history. Yet though "each important discovery has been embodied in some work of special value, no English book has dealt with the Persian subject as a whole, embodying the fruits of modern research, upon the national history, from first to last". Colonel Sykes, "after much hesitation", has fortunately attempted to fill this gap. He has a marked advantage in his close personal knowledge of so much of the ground; for twenty of the best years of his life he has lived in Persia; as a diplomatist, a soldier,

a traveller, and an investigator he has seen the Middle East from various sides, discovered many truths, and penetrated many illusions. The geographical and topographical chapters and references are particularly helpful, such as those that introduce the work—Configuration and Climate, Deserts, Rivers, Fauna, Flora, Minerals, the geography of Elam (chs. I.–III.)—or that chapter VIII. in which the contrast is drawn between the plains and the uplands of Persia, and the influence of the Aryan race on the Iranian plateau is studied. The parallel between Spain and Persia, even if pressed a little too far ethnologically, is suggestive and valuable. In both lands “the traveller from the North” soon “rises on to a plateau”, which is broken by jagged ranges, the *Sierras* or Saws of Spain, “and where the country is generally bare and treeless”. “Traversing this great plateau”, which occupies all the heart of the country, one then crosses the *hot lands* of the South, *Andalus* in Spain, *Garmsir* in Persia, before reaching the Southern Sea. “To the north, as if to complete the analogy”, the Biscayan provinces “differ as much from the Spain of the plateau as the Caspian provinces from the rest of Persia”. Moreover, although Persians are termed “the French of the East”, Colonel Sykes would rather compare them with Spaniards, “whose manner of life is akin to the Persian”, whose country has such similar physical conditions, and who can claim some actual blood-connection with the men of Iran—“for Spaniards are in [some small] part descended from Persians who accompanied the Arab conquerors”. These founded a Shiraz [Xeres] in Spain, and there made the wine, which as sherry still preserves the Persian name”. Even to-day “the best Shiraz wine resembles a nutty Sherry”.

Our author’s account of the historic sites of Persia and their remains is also excellent. Susa, Persepolis, Pasargadae, Ecbatana, and the rest, are well described, and in some cases vividly illustrated: it is perhaps regrettable that Colonel Sykes has not given us the full text of the Behistun inscription of “the son of Vishtasp, the Achaemenian, a Persian, son of a Persian, an Aryan of Aryan descent”.

Specially valuable are the sketches of Persian customs, language, letters, and art (including architecture) in various times (see chapter XV. for the Achaemenian ages, chapter XLI. for the Sasanid, chapter LIV. for the early Islamic, chapter LXI. for the Mongol, chapter LXV. for the Safavi).

Everywhere history and geography are elucidated by the intimate first-hand acquaintance of an untiring and acute traveller with the field of study. In this history the time of early Persian eminence—from the rise of Cyrus the founder, the “servant of Jehovah”, to the death of Darius Hystaspes the organizer and administrator—is thoroughly appreciated and attractively presented, with fullness, critical care, and interest: no less excellent is the treatment of the Sasanid period, perhaps the most virile and attractive time of Persia.

Under Mohammedan rule the writer well brings out the depression of Persia for a century after the Islamic conquest and the partial revival under the Abbasids, symbolized and illustrated by the transference of the capital from Syrian Damascus to Baghdad on the Tigris: chapter XLIX., Persian Ascendancy in the Early Abbasid Period, and chapter L., the Golden Age of Islam, are particularly to the point here. Islamic culture in the East, so largely a product of Persian genius, suffered irreparable injury from the rise of Turkish influence and the Mongol invasions: from the eleventh century A. D. we accordingly find Mohammedan civilization, in spite of its remarkable past and apparent future, steadily on the decline. The thirteenth century was fatal to it: Chingiz Khan and his followers Timur and the Ottomans ruined the gorgeous East, from the Pamir to the Balkans, from Siberia to the Gulf of Persia. "Behold your house is left unto you desolate."

It is an impoverished, shattered, broken, dispeopled, barbarized Orient which sees the troubled history of modern Persia—the rise of a new independent Shiite state in the sixteenth century, the career of Nadir Shah, the disastrous struggles with Russia, the first partition of Persia by Slav and Briton, and the constitutional movement. No part of Colonel Sykes's undertaking is more to be welcomed than those last chapters, from the opening of the Safavi time: for nowhere in Persian history is there more general ignorance, even among historical workers.

The illustrations deserve special notice. They are abundant, apposite, always clear, usually most effective, often beautiful. Besides smaller reproductions of coins, seals, gems, medallions, cylinders, vases, and inscriptions, there are over 160 full-page pictures in the text, some in color, and 7 maps. The latter are not of equal merit or attractiveness, but both the pictorial, geographical, and archaeological illustrations it is difficult to praise too highly.

One may regret that so much space has been given to matters somewhat apart from the "road to Susa" on which the Persian historian must travel: early Oriental affairs, before the fall of Nineveh, likewise Graeco-Macedonian, Roman, and Arabian events, are treated "somewhat more fully than necessary"—the author anticipates such a criticism in his preface and rebuts it with a statement of the need for a "self-contained complete work" on his subject, focussing all "known of the ancient empires in their relations with Persia".

But this book is always delightful, even when it strays from Persia; Colonel Sykes has put some of his most suggestive work and some of his best illustrations into the very chapters which digress most widely to Assyria and Babylon, to Hellas, to Rome, or to Arabia; and every reader must wish a wide circulation and a cordial reception for such an admirable piece of work.